



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

City of San Diego
Planning & Development Review
Building Development Review
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Building Newsletter 3-8

Minimum Ceiling Heights

Interpretations of State and Local Building Codes
1998 California Building Code: Chapter 3
Revision Date: July 1999

Page 1 of 2

Ceiling height information in this building newsletter applies only to Group R Occupancies and is intended for clarification of Section 310.6.1 of the Uniform Building Code.

I. Ceiling Types

- A. Level ceilings: Level ceilings for habitable rooms require 7'-6" minimum clear height. Soffits of beams spaced at 48 inches or more on center shall not be considered as part of a ceiling and may, therefore, project into the required ceiling height provided that the bottoms of the members are not less than 7'-0" above the floor. See Figures 1 and 2.
- B. Sloped ceilings: Sloped ceilings for habitable rooms require 7'-6" minimum clear height in at least 50 percent of the entire floor area of a room. Sloped ceilings for other rooms require 7'-0" minimum height in at least 50 percent of the entire floor area of a room. Any portion of the room which has a ceiling height of less than 5'-0" is not considered to contribute to the required floor area of the room. The maximum sloped ceiling situation permitted by the Code is shown in Figure 3.
- C. Clipped ceilings: A clipped ceiling is a combination of a level ceiling over a portion of a room and a sloped

ceiling over the remainder. The requirements for a clipped ceiling are given in Section I, Items A and B above and shown in Figure 4.

- D. Furred ceilings: Furred ceilings are level ceilings occurring at more than one height. Furred ceilings for habitable rooms require 7'-6" minimum height in at least two-thirds of the entire floor area of a room. It will be acceptable, however, to have the ceiling furred down to a point at which it would not extend below any sloped ceiling line complying with Section I, Item B above. In no case shall the height of the furred ceiling be less than 7'-0" above the floor. See Figure 5.

II. Permitted Encroachments Into Required Ceiling Height

- A. Beams spaced at 48 inches or more on center per Section 310.6.1 of the UBC. See Figures 1 and 2.
- B. In Group R Occupancies light fixtures and smoke detectors which are attached to the ceiling surface shall maintain a minimum clearance of 6'-8" to the floor.
- C. Kitchens, halls, bathrooms and toilet compartments may have a ceiling height of not less than 7'-0" measured to the lowest projection from the ceiling.

Figure 1/Level ceiling with beams less than 48" on center

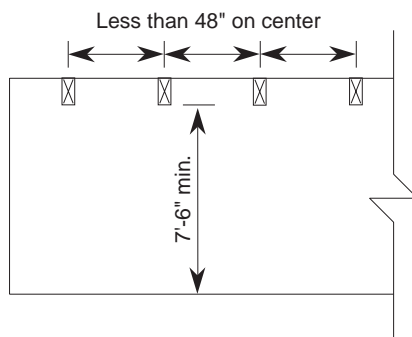


Figure 2/Level ceiling with beams 48" or more on center

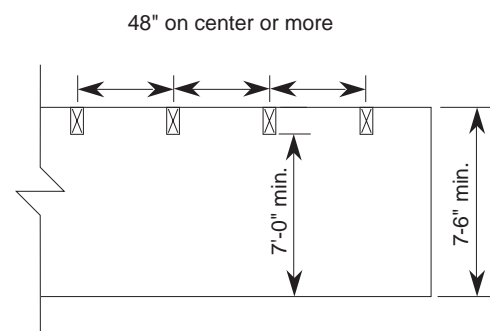
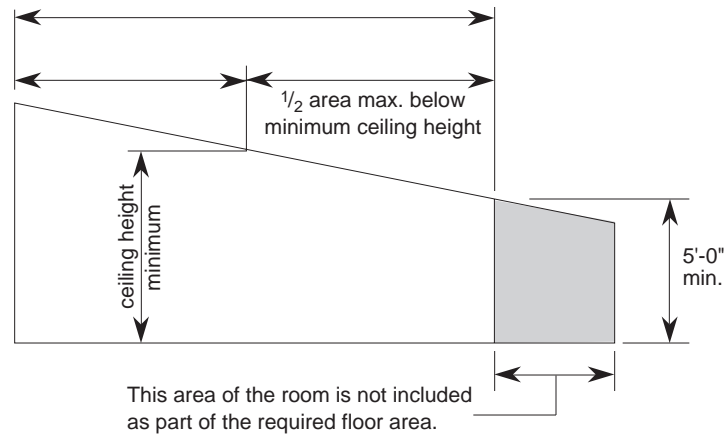
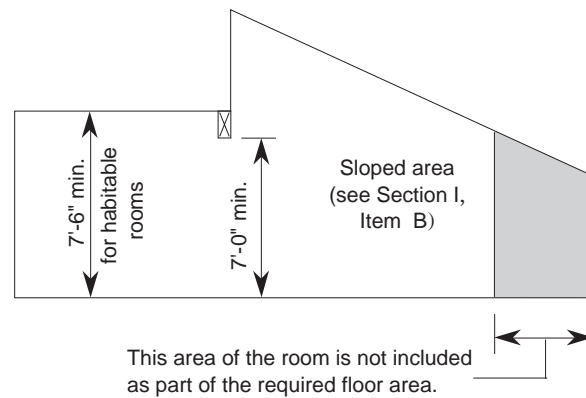


Figure 3/Sloped ceiling**Figure 4/Clipped ceiling****Figure 5/Furred ceiling**